

**Cornish Library Exploratory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Cornish Town Office building**  
**2 November 2021**

Present

Committee Members: Laura Cousineau, Dillon Gallagher, Susan Chandler, Caroline Storrs, Kathi Patterson, Heidi Jaarsma, Larry Dingee. Community members: Keith Mullane, Bill Gallagher, Colleen O'Neill, David Agular, Sandy Guest.

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM. Exploratory Committee members
2. Kathi moved, Susan seconded that the minutes be approved. Heidi asked that the minutes be amended by the addition of the word "probably" to the first part of the last paragraph of page 2. Sentence would now read, "Heidi referenced the Meriden Library which was **probably** not created by donation." The minutes as amended were then approved.
3. Heidi reported on the legal counsel's letter and had compiled his advice into a slide show.
  - The donation of the former general store building establishes a second library. It would be difficult to treat either building as an extension of the other so there would be a need to create a second library.
  - Would the Town be willing to support a second library?
  - If not, a Cy Pres petition would be needed to delist the George Stowell Library building as a library.
  - The complexities keep piling up. The liability to the Town would be different for things such as the furnace going out resulting in a library with no heat (just a sign on the door) or the tenants needing heat.
    - Colleen stated that the Town would not need to do rentals.
    - Caroline questioned if Town would not need to manage the rentals through March of 2023 if they used a property management company.
    - There is 13 cent offset to the tax rate by having rentals.
    - Larry asked if the trustees had the authority to expend funds on non-town owned property . Heidi stated that she would check with counsel on that issue
  - At the time of conveyance, the Town becomes a landowner . At that time an appraisal would need to have been done in order to establish a value for insurance purposes.
4. Heidi outlined a proposed framework for the General Store gift:
  - The General Store Building
    - Complete a title search,
    - Inspect the water and septic,
    - Inspect for lead paint and asbestos,
    - Obtain cost estimates for renovations,
    - Get an updated evaluation
  - The Stowell Library Building:
    - What is the vision for future use of the building,

- Cy Pres will require an inventory of non-cash items.
  - Larry felt there were these issues:
    - The problem of accepting the building with no funding in place,
    - We need more info before making any recommendations.
    - How would the court look at the petition when there is an existing plan in place to do renovations including handi-cap accessibility and add running water with septic to the current library?
  - Caroline spoke about the fundraising effort that had helped defray the cost of the gym, classrooms, and library addition to the school, and how pledges had been given by donors to be paid over the course of several years.
  - Heidi spoke to the Exploratory Committee's charge. She was going to ask legal counsel about spending money on the proposed building.
  - Colleen stated that she would be okay with no rentals. She has received a 10% pledge toward the costs of renovation and mentioned the possibility of USDA funds.
  - The timeline for warrant articles was discussed - 2022 or 2023? Realistically ownership may not transfer until after the 2023 town meeting .
  - The expenses would be more with a bigger building and expanded hours requiring more personnel Kathy stated that she has been trying to come up with an estimated annual appropriation for operating the library as being thought about.
  - Heidi said that, as a town, we have a responsibility to support a library.
  - Larry wanted to know if just razing the building had been considered in light of the decision to not continue with any rental spaces. Colleen stated that it is not an option that she would accept.
  - We need a formal letter from Colleen.
5. George H. Stowell Library trustees' report:
- Kathi stated that the trustees have authority to spend donations made to the library without needing approval from the Town.
  - Heidi confirmed that their authority to spend funds is the same as the Town's.
  - The trustees have authorized the expenditure of \$15,000 but no more than \$20,000 for the architectural conceptual (Phase 1) plan including conducting a public forum and a construction cost estimate.
6. The committee reached a consensus on #2 (Banwell Architects) who had given a verbal estimate of \$10,000 and \$4,000 for the cost of Phase 1 at their presentation. The trustees will contract with Banwell Architects for the Phase 1 plans.. This finding was not a unanimous opinion of all comm. members
7. Committee Reports - There were none.
8. Other Business:
- Colleen spoke about the Friends of the Cornish Library. Their next meeting will be Wednesday, November 10, at the former General Store building.

- She believes it makes sense to split into 2 groups - a Friends of the Cornish Library and Community Center and a Cornish Community Initiative. The Friends will continue in support of library activities and the new group will start a capital campaign to raise funds for the store project and will also be established as a 501(c)(3). She stated that funds raised will be only for the store renovation and not any other purpose.
- Caroline asked what would happen to the funds raised if the store doesn't go to the Town. Colleen said the funds would be returned to the donors.
- Heid thanked Colleen.

9. Citizen's Comments - There were none.

10. Next Meeting - The next meeting will be on November 16 at 6:00 PM at the Town Office building.

11. Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at 7:12 PM.

Minutes submitted by Larry Dingee.

Approved 16 November 2021.